Power device with a short-circuit detector

Publication number: JP2000509933T Publication date: 2000-08-02

Inventor: **Applicant:** Classification:

G01R31/40: H03K17/082; G01R31/00; G01R31/40; - international:

H03K17/082; G01R31/00; (IPC1-7): H03K17/08;

H01L29/78; H03K17/687

- european:

G01R31/40: H03K17/082B Application number: JP19980529235T 19980202

Priority number(s): GB19970003453 19970219; GB19970016839

19970808; WO1998IB00138 19980202

Also published as:



WO9837630 (A1) EP0904636 (A1) US5942886 (A1) EP0904636 (A0) EP0904636 (B1)

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Abstract not available for JP2000509933T Abstract of corresponding document: US5942886

A power device circuit comprises a power semiconductor device (MPWR) in series with a load (LD) between a power supply line (1) and a return line (2), and a short-circuit detector (R1, R2, ... R1', R2', CP) for determining whether the load (LD) is short-circuit. The short-circuit detector examines the distribution of the supply-to-return voltage (Vbg) between the device (MPWR) and the load (LD) by comprising a comparator (CP) which has a first input (+) coupled to a series node (11) between the device and load and a second input (+) from circuit means (R1, R2, ..., R1', R2', ...) coupled between the supply and return lines (1 and 2) to provide the second input (-) with a voltage supply signal (Vbg') which is a predetermined function of the supply-to-return voltage (Vbg). By so comparing the voltage (Vdl) at the series node (11) with the predetermined function of the supply-to-return voltage (Vbg), the detector (SC) provides an output signal (sc) indicating whether or not a short-circuit is present. Preferably pinchresistors (R1,R2) or a voltage-clamp (ZD) are used with the circuit means (R1, R2, ..., R1', R2', ...), so that the predetermined function of the supply-to-return voltage (Vbg) input to the comparator (CP) varies with the magnitude of the supply-to-return voltage (Vbg). By this means a lower percentage of the supplyto-return voltage (Vbg) can be input at a higher magnitude of the supply-to-return voltage (Vbg) than at a lower magnitude.

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